

Claims

- [c1] A method comprising the steps of:
- in a multi-printer environment, selecting for a specific print job a device independent set of desired printer options;
 - comparing the selected options to a definition of printer capabilities;
 - if the options are available within the defined capabilities, then
 - converting the device independent options to printer specific commands; and
 - sending the print job to a selected printer which is responsive to the printer specific commands; and
 - if the options are unavailable within the defined capabilities, then signaling an error.
- [c2] A method according to Claim 1 further comprising the step of storing a plurality of definitions of printer capabilities, at least two of the stored definitions being in differing command formats.
- [c3] A method according to Claim 2 wherein at least three of the stored definitions are in differing command formats.
- [c4] A method according to Claim 1 wherein the step of converting device independent options comprises incorporating into a printable format data file commands corresponding to the selected printer options for a selected printer.
- [c5] A method according to Claim 1 wherein the step of signaling an error comprises signaling at least a selected one of (a) a message indicating the absence of the desired option capability from printers of a designated type; (b) a message indicating the absence of the desired option capability from a printer of a type which may optionally have the capability; and (c) a message indicating that the requested option capability exceeds to limits available to a printer which has a limited capability for the requested option.
- [c6] Apparatus comprising:
- a plurality of printers, each having printer capabilities which vary from other printers in the environment;

an information handling system communicating with said plurality of printers for selectively transmitting thereto specific print jobs, said information handling system having a processor and memory associated with said processor;

program instructions stored in said memory accessibly to said processor and effective when executing on said processor to:

- allow an operator to select for a specific print job a device independent set of desired printer options;
- retain a set of definitions of printer capabilities for each of said plurality of printers;
- compare the operator selected options with a definition of printer capabilities and then
- if the options are available within the defined capabilities, then convert the device independent options to printer specific commands; and
- send the print job to a selected printer which is responsive to the printer specific commands; and
- if the options are unavailable within the defined capabilities, then signal an error.

- [c7] Apparatus according to Claim 6 wherein said program instructions when executing on said processor are further effective to store a plurality of definitions of printer capabilities, at least two of the stored definitions being in differing command formats.
- [c8] Apparatus according to Claim 7 wherein at least three of the stored definitions are in differing command formats.
- [c9] Apparatus according to Claim 6 wherein said program instructions when executing on said processor are further effective to incorporate into a printable format data file commands corresponding to the selected printer options for a selected printer.
- [c10] Apparatus according to Claim 6 wherein said program instructions when executing on said processor are further effective to signal at least a selected

one of (a) a message indicating the absence of the desired option capability from printers of a designated type; (b) a message indicating the absence of the desired option capability from a printer of a type which may optionally have the capability; and (c) a message indicating that the requested option capability exceeds to limits available to a printer which has a limited capability for the requested option.

- [c11] A program product comprising:
- a computer readable medium; and
 - program instructions stored on said medium accessibly to a processor and effective when executing on said processor to:
 - allow an operator to select for a specific print job a device independent set of desired printer options;
 - retain a set of definitions of printer capabilities for each of a plurality of printers;
 - compare the operator selected options with a definition of printer capabilities and then
 - if the options are available within the defined capabilities, then
 - convert the device independent options to printer specific commands; and
 - send the print job to a selected printer which is responsive to the printer specific commands; and
 - if the options are unavailable within the defined capabilities, then signal an error.

- [c12] A product according to Claim 11 wherein said program instructions when executing on a processor are further effective to store a plurality of definitions of printer capabilities, at least two of the stored definitions being in differing command formats.

- [c13] A product according to Claim 12 wherein at least three of the stored definitions are in differing command formats.

- [c14] A product according to Claim 11 wherein said program instructions when executing on said processor are further effective to incorporate into a printable

format data file commands corresponding to the selected printer options for a selected printer.

- [c15] A product according to Claim 11 wherein said program instructions when executing on said processor are further effective to signal at least a selected one of (a) a message indicating the absence of the desired option capability from printers of a designated type; (b) a message indicating the absence of the desired option capability from a printer of a type which may optionally have the capability; and (c) a message indicating that the requested option capability exceeds to limits available to a printer which has a limited capability for the requested option.